(b) if so, the details of the scheme indicating the financial funding pattern; and

(c) the details of the amount allotted/released to the States including Delhi under the said scheme during the last and curent Five Year Plane?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to the State Govemments/UT Administrations for development of tourism circuits/destinations including camping spots under the Scheme of Product/infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits.

The Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of Rs. 1480.19 lakh was extended to State Governments/UT Administrations for development of 20 Camping Spots in the 10th and current. Five Year Plan.

Hot-air balloon tourism

837. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to start hot-air balloon tourism for commercial tourist

purposes;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the States/regions where the project is proposed to be launched and whether it would also cover the Buddhist Centres of Bihar and Orissa; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Development and promotion of tourist places/spots including promotion of adventure tourism/hot-air ballooning is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/UT Administrations including Bihar and Orissa. However, Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance to the State Governments/Union Territories for development of tourism including adventure tourism, on__ the basis of the proposals received from them, subject to availability of funds and *inter-se* priorities.

Development of island tourism in Orissa

838. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the State Government of Orissa proposes development of island tourism in Chilika;

(b) whether it is also planning to organize tourist shopping of handicrafts with the support of the Centre;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Orissa also proposes to sell Orissa to international tourists; and

(e) if so, what is the action plan of the Centre to help the State to achieve the above objective?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned a project-Development of Chilika Lake as a Tourist Destination in the year 2005-06 for a total amount of Rs. 389.05 lakh.

(b) and (c) Department of Industries, Government of Orissa has already opened an Urban Haat at Bhubaneshwar to provide shopping facilities for tourists. A tourism cum handicraft cum cultural festival is also organized by the State Government to promote tourism and shopping of handicrafts.

(d) and (e) Government of Orissa participates in major international travel marts for showcasing the tourist attractions of Orissa. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has sanctioned Rs. 42.50 lakh for Development of Orissa Tourism Information Portal under the scheme of Information Technology in the year 2007-08. Ministry of Tourism through its Overseas Offices, websites and Publicity Campaigns promotes tourist attractions of all States including Orissa. These include advertising in print, electronic media, outdoor locations, public transport, participation in fairs and exhibitions, organizing seminars, road-shows, publication of brochures and collaterals and extending hospitality to media and travel-trade etc.

New thrust to Monsoon Tourism

839. SHRI B.J. PANDA.
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to give a new thrust to "Monsoon Tourism" which is attracting tourists in a big way to India;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what are the details of the regions in India where this variety of tourism is proposed to be launched and whether it would also cover Orissa; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) The Ministry of Tourism promotes various tourism themes of India including Monsoon Tourism. These themes are given wide publicity in the international and domestic markets through media campaigns, the official website of the Ministry and publicity material. Information is also disseminated by the Indiatourism offices in India and overseas.

Promotion of cruise tourism in Orissa

840. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) what is the action plan of Government to promote cruise tourism in the country;

(b) which are its high-potential spots; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to develop this sector in Orissa to improve the economy of its coastal region?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) Ministry of Tourism promotes cruise tourism for the whole country including Orissa through brochures, CDs and publicity material distributed through its Indiatourism offices in India and abroad.

The Draft Cruise Shipping Policy of Ministry of Shipping provides for development of ports in a phased manner.